

Washington State's Health Homes create millions in Medicare savings

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OLYMPIA—A preliminary federal report shows significant shared state and federal Medicare savings under the Washington's Health Home initiative.

According to the report released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), early indicators of shared savings, based on a reduction of Medicare costs and achieved performance measures, indicates \$21.6 million savings in Medicare costs, of which the state could receive approximately \$10.8 million.

"This initiative not only drives positive improvements for individuals with chronic and complex health needs, but it also provides shared savings to the state for reducing Medicare health care costs," said Bill Moss, DSHS Assistant Secretary.

Health Homes are a federal-state partnership providing new opportunities for Washington to establish intensive care coordination and management for individuals who receive both Medicaid and Medicare benefits. Health Home services are also available to eligible individuals on Medicaid.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Health Care Authority implemented Health Homes in July 2013. Currently, Health Homes are available in 37 counties, excluding King and Snohomish.

Individuals who are eligible for Health Home benefits have at least one chronic condition, including mental illness and substance use disorder, and are at risk for another chronic condition as measured by risk scoring.

Health Home Care Coordinators provide intensive person-centered support, utilizing community partners to engage individuals to improve their health, while connecting them to needed services.

Washington has been participating in the CMS Medicare-Medicaid Financial Alignment Initiative to enhance health care access and quality of care, promote independence in the community, and achieve cost savings with better health outcomes.